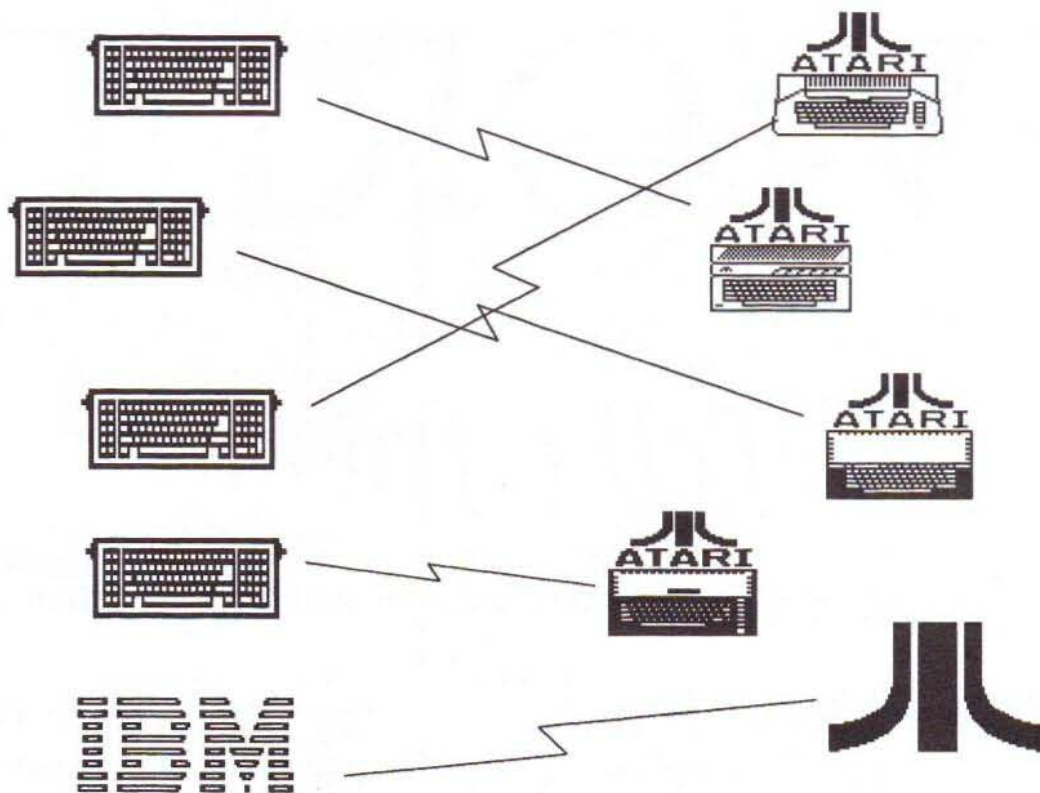


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San Leandro Computer Club May, 1990

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Many thanks to those who take the time and effort to contribute to this publication!

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CONTENTS

May 1990

FEATURES

Page

Chaos Strikes Back, part two.4
Paul Gittins, Portland Atari Club

Review: Wordflair5
Dave Roman

Getting Along With GDOS9
Dave Roman

Multisync Monitor Switch Box10
Don Homen

DEPARTMENTS

Pounding on the 8-Bits12
Bob Woolley

Calendar17
Make sure you don't miss important meetings and events.

Application17
Openings still available for new members.

Moran's Minutes18
Jim Moran

Message from the PresidentBackcover
Keith Sammons

SEE YOU AT THE MAIN MEETING

May 1

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Review: Part 2

CHAOS STRIKES BACK (FTL)

Review by Paul Gittins of the
Portland Atari Club

(Continued from last month)

This is known as the crossroads and is where the game truly begins. From this point you can select one of the four directions and begin your search in earnest. You may select from KU (fighter), ROS (ninja), DAIN (Wizard), or NETA (Priest) pathways. The object, (other than getting bashed, burned, bonked, broasted and otherwise abused), is to complete each of the four paths and along the way obtain a special element called Corbum which must then be thrown into a special FUL YA (mondo fire) pit where it is consumed.

Make no mistake about it, this game is tough! At the time of this writing I have destroyed two of the Corbum elements and completed all four of the pathways down to the Diabolical Demon Director level. There are still several puzzles left to solve and a couple of keys to find. Many of the monsters regenerate and so there is always a new surprise waiting just around the corner.

There are new monsters and old ones. I know I have killed at least 13 dragons and several of the stone golems. I have killed more of those infernal poison worms than I can count and the place is littered with rocks and boulders from the dead rock heap monsters. There are several heaps of armor from all the Deth Knights I have taken out along the way as well.

Do I like this game? You bet

I do. I occasionally get up on the game roundtable on GENie to see what everyone else has to say and the new CSB section is a virtual hotbed of activity. I'm certain there have been over 300 messages uploaded in the past two weeks. You can be certain this game is a solid hit. The people at FTL have done a bangup job and deserve the heartiest congratulations. The game is very challenging and yet with persistence and skill you can win. You must save your game often and you cannot leave any stone unturned. If you are stumped you can save your game at that location and after turning off your computer you can boot up the utility disk. The utility disk that comes with CSB also contains a hint oracle which will look at your save game and give you specific or general hints about the particular puzzle you are looking at. This is a great concept and I have used and enjoyed it regularly. You can also get information about the various monsters so at least you know what that thing was that just kicked your butt all over dungeonville.

Now that I know better, I will give a couple of hints about the first room and leave you with a whetted appetite. Pick up the chest and all the coins you can find. Kill the worms if you need to and take the worm rounds for food. Once you encounter the dragons you won't need worm rounds any more, but for now they are useful. Walk around the room and bump into the wall every step of the way. There is an invisible room containing a complete set of armor which you will need. Pick up the torch and put it into the holder. This opens a corridor and

exit from this room. If you are hurt you can rest for a while in the room where the armor is found but when you leave you will probably find a couple of worms waiting. Once you have killed the first couple of worms you can search the room at your leisure if you don't step on the hidden floor switch and make more of the little devils. Finally, use your coins wisely, some items can be used many times and others only once.

Now you are on your own. You probably want to know if you must own the original DM game in order to play CSB. In the most strict sense you don't, but without DM you don't have much of a chance. It isn't only the original documentation, it's the experience and the chance to learn the various spells and build up your heroes to their maximum potential. This game requires not only powerful heroes, but you as the player must be experienced as well.

In summary, CSB is a great game. At \$34.95 the value is excellent. I have put more hours into this game series than I ever will in any of my other game software. It is fun, exciting, challenging, and most important of all, it is winnable. I have fully enjoyed my time with this game and if it weren't for this review I would be playing it right now. One final little hint before I get back into the action. If you have access to GENie, many people have uploaded powerful character sets which you can download and use as your own if your heroes are too wimpy for your tastes. See you in the dungeon.

Paul Gittins, Portland Atari Club.

Wordflair Review

By Dave Roman

Ever since I was a youngster, I have been fascinated by printing and the printing process. For a high school science fair project I, with a little help from my Dad, made a model of the original Gutenberg printing press complete with moveable type. It even worked and was good enough to take the first prize at the high school science fair, but was only worthy of an honorable mention at a regional science fair. What, you may ask, does this have to do with a review of a software package? Well, nothing really, except that Wordflair kind of rekindled that interest again.

The subtitle on the slipcover of Wordflair says this is "the integrated document processor." I think this is the perfect description of this product which will be ideal for anyone making newsletters, posters, flyers or other small documents consisting of one or more pages.

Atari user group newsletter editors take note: with Wordflair, the Migraph Hand Scanner and a good 24-pin printer, you could be putting out newsletters with the best of them. Coffee shop and small restaurant owners can use the same equipment listed above to produce some attractive menus and special-of-the-day flyers. Don't get me wrong, however, and think that Wordflair is only good for newsletters because that's not true.

Wordflair is very easy to use whether you want to write a letter to your Aunt Minnie or send a business letter to your clients listed in the database you created in Wordflair. You could even use Wordflair to create your own distinctive letterhead to use over and over again. Just about anything you are doing with your current word processor you can do with Wordflair. If you are intent on writing the Great

American Novel, however, I would recommend a more suitable word processor. Wordflair does not have automatic table of contents or index generators. This is not to say Wordflair could not produce the Great American Novel, because it probably could, but Wordflair is designed to be a small document processor and this is what it does very nicely.

For me to use a software package for any serious work it has to be, first of all, easy to use. Wordflair is easy to use, but I recommend reading the manual and doing the tutorials to get the knowledge needed to use the package effectively. The second feature I look for is a quality product produced by the package. This could be a nicely managed database or simply entertainment from a good game. Here Wordflair comes through again with its professional looking printed pages. The third item I look for is attractive pricing. Wordflair measures up again with its under \$100 price tag.

Wordflair comes with a quality manual of about 250 pages in a hardcover, 3 ring, 7 by 9 inch binder. The manual has an index so you will be able to find the item you are looking for rather easily. A table of contents is provided also. The first chapter is devoted to system requirements, how to load Wordflair, and describing what is on the screen and how to use these items. The second chapter is three tutorials ranging from simple to advanced, and as I mentioned above, it would be a good idea to go through them for a better understanding of what Wordflair can do. The third chapter is the reference chapter and here all of the commands and icons used in Wordflair are described. An appendix tells how to recreate all the samples provided with the program

and gives keyboard commands for all the menu items.

The official Atari GDOS user's manual is provided because Wordflair does use and require GDOS. More about this later.

Just what do you need in the way of hardware to get Wordflair up and running? You will need an Atari 520 ST with 1 meg of RAM minimum. Of course 1040's and the Mega series computers will also work. You will need 2 floppy drives or one floppy with a hard drive. Wordflair will work with a color monitor running in medium resolution, but works best with a monochrome monitor with its high resolution screen. Finally you will need a printer to produce your masterpieces on paper. Wordflair provides GDOS printer drivers for the FX-80 9-pin dot matrix printers and the Star NB15 24-pin dot matrix printers, so any Epson or Epson compatible should work. Also the Atari SMM804 dot matrix printer is included. If you have the Atari SLM804 laser printer then the GDOS driver supplied with the printer will work with Wordflair.

For Wordflair to print anything, you must have GDOS or G+PLUS installed. If you are already using GDOS or G+PLUS then you are in business, but if not, then you will have to install one of them. Wordflair comes with GDOS and a modified version of G+PLUS.

I feel that any software package that relies heavily on the printed page will be using GDOS. Many packages use it now, such as most Desk Top Publishing packages, Easy Draw, LDW Power and many others. I think if you are into using these types of programs, then you had better learn about GDOS. To explain GDOS is out of the reach of this review, however recent publica-

tions such as *Current Notes* and *Atari Explorer* have had excellent articles on GDOS. Check with your user group print librarian.

The December *ST Informer* PD disk has a program called Assassin that will create an ASSIGN.SYS file for you very easily. The program works quite well and does a good job. The GDOS manual that comes with Wordflair does a fairly good job explaining GDOS, and there is also an installation program on the Wordflair disk that will help you in creating your ASSIGN.SYS file and GDOS font folder.

G+PLUS is a commercial program that can take the place of, and some of the headaches out of, GDOS. With G+PLUS, you can have your ASSIGN.SYS file located anywhere on your hard disk, named anything you want. G+PLUS will let you create a separate ASSIGN.SYS file for each program that requires it, and only that ASSIGN.SYS file will load, automatically, when you load your main program. As I mentioned above, you need GDOS or G+PLUS to get any kind of printout from Wordflair. If you don't have GDOS installed properly, the print menu selection will be lighted out, and only the system font will be available to use on the screen. The fonts supplied with Wordflair are Swiss, Dutch and Typewriter. These fonts are supplied in both medium rez and high rez screen and printer fonts for the printers mentioned above. They have all the usual styles available, such as bold, underline, outline, italic etc. and all the popular point sizes from small to huge.

To use Wordflair, all you have to do is start typing. Of course you should set your margins and select the proper font style for the document that you are making. The default font is 12 point Swiss font. The region you will be typing on is called the background write region. When you get to the end of the page, the next page will be brought

up automatically, and most of the time you will not even notice it.

Now suppose you want to add some clip art to your document. Wordflair can import any clip art saved with the .IMG extender. You go up to the graph icon, click on it and put the cursor where you want the upper left corner of the clip art. Hold down the left hand button and draw a rubber band box approximately the size you want for your clip art. Let go of the mouse button and a box will be drawn on the screen. If there was any text in the area of the box it will be immediately wrapped around the box. Go up to the file menu and click on Import File. Select the file you want to import into your document and presto! There it is.

This is the procedure you will follow for most of the work you will be doing with Wordflair. If you import clip art into your document, be forewarned that the clip art is not saved, when you save your document to disk. Only the path telling Wordflair where the clip art is located is saved. This means you will have to have that particular clip art in the same place when you load your document again. This will not be so much of a problem for hard disk owners, but could be troublesome for floppy users.

The ABCD icon at the top of the screen is called the write icon, and is used if you want to enter text at any particular place within the main body of your document. You create the Write region the same way you created the clip art area except you click on the ABCD icon to start the procedure. The same thing happens; a box is drawn and text is wrapped around it. You can now enter text in that particular box in another type font, size or style.

If that was all that Wordflair did it would still be a very good buy for the money, but there is much more that this program is capable of doing. Wordflair has spreadsheet capability with database features

built right into it. No longer do you have to load in files from different programs to link them to your document. You can link database and spreadsheet data all you want while you are creating your document.

One of the icons along the top of the screen is a calc icon. Click on this icon and position it in your document just as you did the write icon. The rubber band box is drawn and text wrapped around just as before except a 0 appears in the box. This is simply a spreadsheet cell. You can create as many as you need, name each one a unique name, and enter formulas, data or one of Wordflair's special spreadsheet functions. The cells can be linked to each other so that data changes in one cell will reflect in the other cells, just like a spreadsheet. The spreadsheet functions that Wordflair provides are, AVG, EXP, FV, IF, LN, NPV, PMT, PV, RND, SDV and SQRT. If you are familiar with spreadsheets you will know what these mean and see that these are the most useful functions in a spreadsheet. You can create your own formulas in the cells, such as Calc1 + Calc2 * 52. This means that if this formula was put in cell Calc3, then the value in cell Calc1, plus the value in cell Calc2, will be multiplied by 52 to give you a value in Calc3. The cells can be formatted to reflect commas, dollar signs, percentages and the number of decimal places. The values can also be aligned left right or center. You have the space to create a formula of more than 90 characters in length for each cell you create. All in all a very versatile spreadsheet already integrated into your word processor.

To use the database portion of this program, you will have to create a database first, and then enter the data into it. You create each field by creating write regions and calc regions as previously described, naming them and filling them with data. You then save this as a record file and one or all

records can be merged into your document. This can be very useful for mail merge.

Theoretically you should be able to create a record file containing 999 records, but, I have found a problem with this. I have tried to create several databases of varying sizes and I found that when the record file size reaches somewhere in the vicinity of 32700 bytes, the record file crashes. I do not know if others have this problem. I have contacted Wordflair about this problem, but as of this writing I have not received any answer. There is no warning of the impending crash and the file is useless after the crash. Be very careful when creating your record file and keep it small until this problem is resolved. On the top right corner of the Wordflair screen is the records file information telling you what file you have opened and the record number in current use. You can toggle between two records using the buttons in the record file block. You can create a subset record file from your database to only show the records that meet certain criteria. It looks like a nicely designed database and I am sure the above problem will be resolved quickly. I hear there are plans in the works for the database to read in files created with other databases. This would be nice.

Is there any more you ask? Yep; Wordflair can create graphs in your document just as it did with the clip art. In fact you use the same icon for graphs as you do for clip art. Just click on the graph icon and bring it into your document as before. Double click on the box you created to bring up the setup box for your graph. You can select from a bar, pie or line graph, and have up to eight elements in each graph. You can name the elements as well as the horizontal and vertical axes. You can use Wordflair's default name for the graph or name it something else. The graph element values can

be entered manually, or can be linked to spreadsheet cells, and will update automatically as the values in the linked cells change.

Among the icons along the top of the Wordflair screen are the already mentioned write, calc and graph icons. The next one is the title icon. Clicking on the title icon will display the names of all the regions you have created on the active page. This is useful when linking certain regions to other regions as in formulas or spreadsheet cells. Clicking the icon again will return you to your document. The next icon is the grid icon. This will overlay a grid on your screen that can be set to any size you desire. Also, you can set the grid up as a column grid and enter the number of columns you want and the size of the space between them. Moving along, the next icon is the full page view icon. This is a powerful feature and lets you preview just what your page will look like with all the clip art, graphs and other items you linked in to it. The regions containing the graphs and art work can be moved or resized from within the full page view. The next icon is the help window. This will bring up a text screen on the right of your document with instructions to help you out of your problem. The pen icon is next and this allows you to draw lines in your document. These lines can be thin, medium or thick and with or without arrow points. The vacuum cleaner icon is just that. You select a region you want to delete and click on the vacuum cleaner icon, point to the region you want to delete and click. Presto! It's gone. At the next icon, you can select the page number of a multiple page document you want to work on.

Above the icons, the name of the current active region is displayed, and above that are the now familiar GEM drop down menus. The file, edit and format menus contain controls that affect the document, such as saving, loading, cutting, pasting,

finding, and controls for setting up regions and printing your document. The record menu has all the controls that affect a database you are working on, and the font and style menu allows you to choose the font type, style and size. The page menu will allow cutting and pasting of whole pages and moving from page to page. Also under this menu are the setups for the grid type and size and for the type of measurement you want to use for grid size, margins and the ruler displayed on the screen. These can be in inches, centimeters or picas. Picas are printers' measurements, and are used for more exact settings. The grid can be setup as a snap-to-grid which allows exact placement of regions in your document. The ruler can be turned on or off and the lines defining the regions you create can be turned on or off. You can set up screen defaults to your liking, such as margins, paper size, paragraph indent, font, style etc., and save them so Wordflair will load the way you want it the next time.

Is there anything Wordflair does not have that I wish it had? Yes, there are a few things I would like to see. First of all, I need a spelling checker and I understand that one will be forthcoming. Another thing I would like to see is a landscape page feature. Right now all you can select from is US and English letter and legal sizes of paper. I would like to see some rudimentary drawing tools, such as squares and circles, and some style features for the lines, (dashed, dotted etc.). There is a frame feature, that allows you to draw a frame around all or part of your page, with thin, medium or thick lines having square or rounded corners. I suppose you could use this for drawing squares, except that it will only frame the active region you are working in. I would like the ability to draw squares, etc., anywhere, just as you do the lines. Another nice thing would be if Wordflair could incor-

porate the date from the Atari Control Panel, and use it for calculations and/or date stamping. There are a lot of people who keep the current date in the computer.

Is there anything I don't like about Wordflair? There are a few things happening that I am not sure about. I am not going to blame Wordflair for the erratic bombing I seem to get now and then, for no apparent reason, except to say I don't get it with any of the other programs I use frequently. However, I do have a hard disk that goes flakey on me at will, and I have a new Mega 2 computer. Also, I am not a touch typist, and I have big fingers, so striking multiple keys at the same time is a problem. I am used to the 520 ST keyboard, and the Mega 2 keyboard is not the same. The crashing I get when using Wordflair is rare, and does not seem to occur in any pattern. The only thing I can recommend here is saving the document often. It takes just a few seconds to save a document, about the same time as it takes for a sip of coffee. This is good practice, no matter what program you are working with. I also have a problem setting the right hand margin and getting it to come out correctly on the printout. Using the Optimized setting seems to do a little better with the right hand margins. This is a GDOS problem and Wordflair is aware of it. I am also having trouble when I export a document as ASCII. It seems that only the page that is on the screen at the time of the ASCII save will get saved. The rest of the document goes off into never-never land. This happens whether I select carriage returns or not. I was not the only person who had this problem and I know of several people who never experienced this problem. Here, lately, the documents I have saved in ASCII have worked just fine. It could be a problem with documents containing write regions, calc regions or whatever. I have not had

the opportunity to explore this problem further. If other users have these or other problems, they should notify Blue Chip Inc. so they can fix them. They appear to be very interested in getting a good, workable program out there. Another problem that surfaced recently is that sometimes when a document with floating write regions is saved, it will not reload. This apparently has something to do with the amount of floating write regions, size of the regions or their location in the document. I personally have not experienced this problem yet.

By the way, a floating write region is a region whose size will change automatically to the size of the information being transferred into it. This is used a lot in letters or documents that expect to get information imported into them from a database. Mail merge or form letters would be a good example. With all of the above problems or troubles that Wordflair has, I am pleased to say that a major problem with Wordflair has already been fixed with a revision. This occurred when I would quit Wordflair and try to work on another program that used GDOS. The correct ASSIGN.SYS file would not load with the other program, unless I rebooted the computer. This problem has been corrected and registered owners of version 1.00 should have already received the new revision 1.01. Also there were some versions of 1.00 that were released with only one printer driver, the SMM804. The newer version 1.01 has all the printer drivers and again registered owners should have received the upgrade.

Would I recommend Wordflair? Yes. Wordflair is a powerful package and can do a lot for one program. If you do a lot of linking spreadsheet or database files to your word processor documents, then try this one out. It is very easy to work with, once you get the basic commands down. The grid markings and

ruler measurements in Wordflair are very accurate. For instance, if I draw a 3 inch square using the pen, I will get a 3 inch square printed out on my NEC P6. The same thing happens when using the frame function; you will get exactly what you called for. I used Wordflair for some two months since receiving a review copy before I sat down to write this review. I have had a lot of enjoyment and some frustrations. I want to thank Ms. Lauren Flanagan-Sellers, Chairman of Blue Chip International, Inc., the developers and distributors of Wordflair, for her help. She spent a considerable amount of time on the phone with me and I thank her for her time and patience. By the way, there is a new address for Wordflair, they can be contacted at Goldleaf Publishing, Inc., 700 Larkspur Landing Circle, Suite 199, Larkspur, CA 94939. The phone number is 415/381-7717.

I for one would like to see Wordflair succeed, as I think that it is a very good product. Please let Wordflair know of any problems you might run into. If you can, include a disk with the troublesome file on it.

Wordflair is not copy protected, so you can load it on your hard disk easily. Please respect this and do not pirate this or any other program. Only by users purchasing these programs will Blue Chip and others continue to update and improve their product, and thereby continue to support the Atari community around the world.

I will try to keep you informed of any changes to the Wordflair program as I find out about them.

*Thanx,
Dave Roman
San Leandro Computer Club.*

GETTING ALONG WITH GDOS

Dave Roman

With all the software that is available for the ST computers nowadays which makes use of GDOS, there are still a lot of people who do not understand how to use GDOS. GDOS was supposed to be an integral part of GEM so that all you had to do was load the fonts and printer drivers from disk and GEM would take care of the rest. However this is not the case and we have to load in GDOS at computer start up time in order for it to have an effect. GDOS stands for Graphics Device Operating System. It's simply an extension of TOS to load disk based fonts and drivers. You will need two folders to use GDOS. The first is an AUTO folder on your boot disk with the GDOS program residing in it. The second is the GDOS font folder. This is the folder that holds the fonts you will be using, both screen and printer fonts, and the device driver for the particular output device you are using. This will usually be a printer. Another very important file is the ASSIGN.SYS file explained later. This file must be in the root directory of your boot disk and tells GDOS where to find the fonts and drivers it must load.

There are numerous fonts and printer drivers developed for use in GDOS and it can sometimes seem like a nightmare finding out what ones you need to use. This is where the ASSIGN.SYS file comes into play. A properly laid out ASSIGN.SYS file with only the needed fonts and drivers in a separate folder will make life that much easier. It is not hard to understand GDOS if you break it down into individual elements and try to understand what each element is supposed to do.

Let's look at the font filenames first. The font filenames follow a rather strict pattern and you can tell a lot about a font just by looking at it's filename. The first two letters of a font filename will tell you who, or for whom, the font was developed. ATARI suggests using AT but any combinations of letters can be used. Most GDOS fonts will have the AT

letters. The second and third letters give you the font typeface. Some combinations of letters are:

"SS" - Swiss Typeface
 "TR" - Dutch Typeface
 "TP" - Typewriter Typeface
 "CA" - Calligraphy Typeface
 "HI" - Hi-Tech Typeface
 "RR" - Rocky Typeface

The fourth and fifth characters in the font filename are numbers and tell you the font size in points. One point is 1/72", so a font size of 10 would be 10/72" or a little over an eighth of an inch in height. Fonts come in a variety of sizes and each size requires its own file.

The last two letters, the seventh and eighth, tell you what device the font is intended for, such as:

"LO" - Low resolution screen fonts with a resolution of 45 X 45

"CG" - Medium resolution screen fonts with a resolution of 90 X 45

"HI" - High resolution screen fonts with a resolution of 90 X 90

" " - Low or High resolution screen fonts with a resolution of 90 X 90 (Blank)

"MF" - ATARI GEM Metafile device driver with a resolution of 254 X 254

"LB" - ATARI SMM804 dot matrix printer with a resolution of 160 X 72

"LS" - ATARI SLM804 laser printer with a resolution of 300 X 300

"EP" - Epson FX and compatible 9 pin printers with a resolution of 120 X 144

"SP" - Star NB and compatible 24 pin printers with a resolution of 180 X 180

"NP" - NEC P6/P7 and compatible 24 pin printers with a resolution of 360 X 360.

There are and will be other drivers made available for other devices such as Cameras and Plotters.

The extension of the filename must be .FNT.

Now how does all this look when put together? Suppose you had a font

with the filename ATTR12SP.FNT. What does that tell you?

"AT" - The font was developed by or for ATARI for ATARI equipment

"TR" - The font has Dutch typeface

"12" - The font is 12/72" high or 12 points high

"SP" - The font was developed for use with the Star NB or compatible printers.

The folder where you store all these fonts is another integral part of GDOS. You can name your folder anything but some patterns seem to have developed, such as GDOSFONT, GEMSYS etc. The important thing to remember here is to let the ASSIGN.SYS file know the name of the folder.

The ASSIGN.SYS file is the heart of the whole thing and perhaps the most misunderstood file on your computer. The ASSIGN.SYS file is nothing more than an ASCII file telling GEM what fonts and printer drivers to load and where these fonts and printer drivers are located.

The first line tells GEM where to find all the goodies. It is the PATH and it cannot be over 64 characters in length. If for instance, you have your Wordflair program residing on drive D of your hard drive in a folder named WORDPROC and your fonts and printer driver stored in a file called GDOSFONT, then the first line of the ASSIGN.SYS file would have to read `PATH = D:\WORDPROC\GDOSFONT\`. That's all there is to it.

You can edit your ASSIGN.SYS file in a text editor or word processor capable of loading and saving ASCII files.

The other lines in your ASSIGN.SYS file will be separated by numbers. These numbers are reserved for certain functions and the correct filenames have to be associated with the correct numbers. These numbers are:

01 - 10 for the screen fonts
 11 - 20 for pen plotter fonts
 21 - 30 for where printer fonts, including laser printers, go
 31 - 40 for Metafile fonts

41 - 50 for where the Polaroid Palette Camera fonts will go
51 - 60 for Graphics Tablets.

The ones we will be concerned with are 01-04, 21 and 31. The 01 line is for the default screen drivers and is usually left blank. 02 is for the low resolution screen fonts. 03 is for medium resolution screen fonts. 04 is for high resolution screen fonts. 21 is for the printer driver. A note of caution is warranted here. Some programs only recognize 21 as the correct slot for their printer drivers while other programs will allow you to use more than one printer driver number. For instance you could have 21 as a 9 pin driver while 23 could be a 24 pin driver. Most likely if your program only allows one printer driver it will have to go in the line 21 slot regardless of the type of printer it is. Finally, 31 is for the metafile driver.

Load an ASSIGN.SYS file into your text editor and take a look at it. This will all seem to make more sense when it's laid out in front of you. Any line in the ASSIGN.SYS file preceded by a ";" is a comment line and is not acted on by the program.

You should know that font files can take up a tremendous amount of memory so only the files you require for a particular monitor and output device should be loaded into memory. The files for the higher point size printer fonts, especially 24 pin and laser printers, can eat up a tremendous amount of memory. You can conserve memory with a good, cleaned up ASSIGN.SYS file and font folder.

If you are using GDOS now, you can put your new GDOSFONT folder in the directory with the program that will be using it and, as explained above, edit your ASSIGN.SYS file to reflect this.

If you have another ASSIGN.SYS file which you use with another GDOS program, rename it to something like ASSIGN.SYX then copy the edited ASSIGN.SYS file to the root directory of your hard drive or boot disk and reboot. You should now be able to use your new GDOS program.

If you are not using GDOS now, then you need to load the GDOS program into the AUTO folder on your hard disk or boot disk before

rebooting. Most software programs that require GDOS will have the latest version of GDOS included on the disk. Now reboot and the "ATARI GDOS VER. 1.1 INSTALLED" will appear on your screen.

There is a commercial program available that replaces GDOS and will function like GDOS plus give you some added benefits. The program, called G+PLUS, is marketed by CodeHead Software. This is a very good and easy to use program and well worth its small price, especially if you are using more than one program that requires GDOS. You can load G+PLUS into the AUTO folder and either remove GDOS from the folder or change its extension to something like .PRX so GDOS will not load.

Now using the G+PLUS menus, you can create an ASSIGN.SYS file for each program and name that file anything you like, such as EASYDRAW.SYS for the EASYDRAW ASSIGN.SYS file.

With G+PLUS the .SYS files can be located anywhere in any folders as long as the G+PLUS Installation Editor knows where they are. An additional benefit is that G+PLUS is faster than GDOS so you will not have to spend so much time waiting around for GDOS to do it's thing.

Any time you change your monitor resolution or printer or want to add or remove fonts you will have to change your GDOS or G+PLUS font folders and the ASSIGN.SYS file(s). Remember, if you are conserving memory, then it is important to only load those fonts or drivers that are required.

I hope this has cleared up some of the mystery of GDOS for those of you who are having problems. There have been several good articles appearing in the ATARI specific magazines on GDOS such as *Atari Explorer*, *Current Notes* and others. Remember, GDOS is not as mysterious as it looks and is not really that difficult a monster to tame. So grab your whips and chairs and climb into the cage with your computer and GDOS and good luck.

Thanx,
Dave Roman
San Leandro Computer Club

Multisync Monitor Switch Box

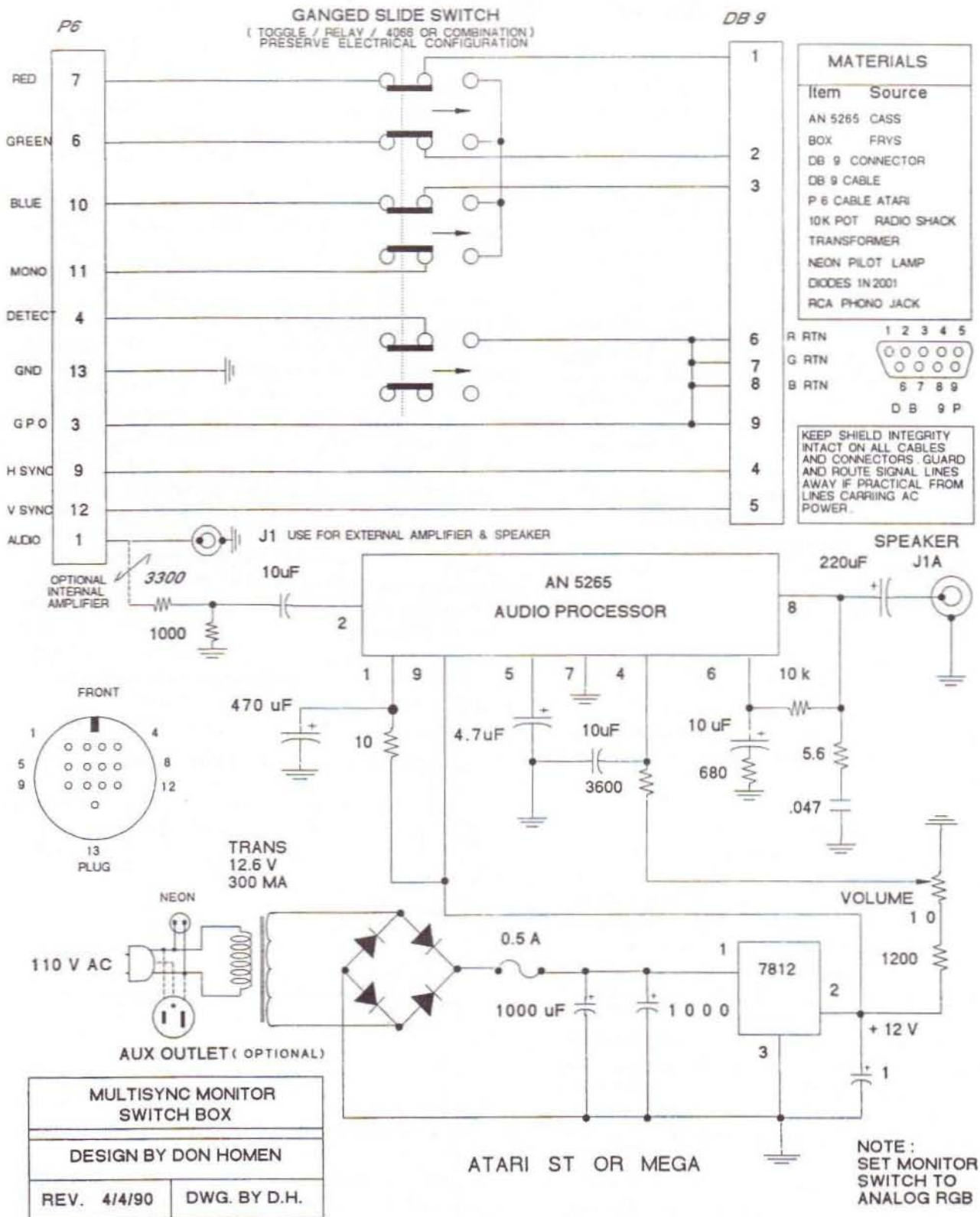
Don Homen

Construction Hints: Running the cables to the inside of the box has benefits. It will save money, less connectors are needed, and it is easier to maintain the cable shielding. The DB-9P connector goes to the monitor. The P6-13P connects to the computer. Select the male or female terminating connectors or cables as to their availability and your preference. Mechanical relays (109P1074) will work. The 110v 60hz coils did not seem to cause any more screen video interference than when using the ganged slide switches. As most monitors do not come with amplifiers and speakers, the MultiSyncs included, there are a number of options. The audio from P6, pin 1 can go to a jack to plug in an amplifier and speaker. Otherwise connect the optional amplifier to this line, and if a built-in speaker is wanted, connect directly to the 220 mfd cap. and to gnd. Add J1A if an external speaker is used with the built-in amplifier.

Parts Procurement: Some of the vendors in the Bay Area are Quinns, Wierd Stuff, Fry's, Radio Shack, Cass Electronics, as well as the Atari Dealers.

Personal Observations: This unit compares favorably to the Omniswitch by Talon Technology (\$89.95) in quality of output. The Omniswitch has push button switches and supports extra drives. I added the amplifier in the drawing and a power light to my Omniswitch.

Anyone considering this project should also check into the MultiSync Monitor Adaptor that is advertised by E. Arthur Brown Co. This unit appears to have a built in amplifier and speaker and retails for \$59.95.



Pounding on the 8-Bits

Buy your own / Share what you know / 8 bits are plenty

So, have you seen those cute little mini-AT vertical cases for the IBM? Don't they just make you wish you had an MS-DOS machine to put in one? Why? Just put an 8-bit in there!

First, how much? You don't want to hack up a "good" machine for this maybe, so get a 600XL from San Jose Computer for \$20. To that, you will need to add nice video and 64K for about \$15. Next is a case and power supply which I got at WCCF from USM Distributors in Fremont for \$100. The other major component is the keyboard controller (\$48) and the keyboard (\$30 and up). You will also need the I/O, but you need that anyway. For a disk drive, you are pretty much limited to an XF551 unless you want to do a LOT of hacking, although a Rana or Indus could probably be used also (who would want something like this with an 88K drive?). Throw a P:R connection in there and you're pretty much complete with everything tucked nicely under the covers. Assuming that you already have an XF551 and P:R Connection, total cost is around \$250. Not too bad if you're a normal person, a drop in the bucket if you're a rabid die-hard....

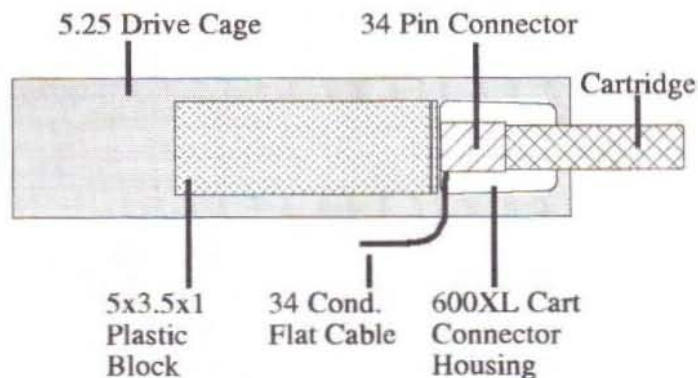
Still in the game? Good! Let's get to it.

Since the 600XL has no video output jack, you must install all the parts Atari left off the board except for the connector itself. You can get instructions from a number of sources to do this. You also need a couple of 64Kx4 DRAM chips to kick the memory up to 64K. Directions for this are also around (maybe next month - it's not hard).

First thing you notice if you got a mini case is the lack of clearance for the 600XL board. Run down to your radial arm saw and whack off the board at the keyboard connector. Cut just to the outside of the ground surface with the mounting holes in it so you'll have some nice way to mount the thing (this will cut about two inches off the board). You may have copper traces hanging out near the cut which you need to clean up with a file. To attach this board, I used a piece of 3/16 Plexiglas (scrap at the local dealer - \$1) the same size as the IBM board, mounted in the IBM holes. The 600XL board is then screwed to the plastic using short standoffs. For power, either clip off one of the IBM board +5 volt connectors and solder it to your 600XL board or make a little adaptor cable (if you need any more direction than that, maybe you shouldn't be doing this hack). DON'T get the wiring mixed up - these switching supplies do not run well with no load and are also perfectly capable of burning your Atari to a crisp. Now that the board is in there, take it out for some more work, OK?

The major problem in a project like this is the keyboard. In this case, the TransKey adaptor makes it a snap. Solder in the board according to the instructions and plug the IBM keyboard connector cable into the TransKey socket. Now, your keyboard plugs into the connector on your new case - no sweat!

Not so simple is the cartridge socket. I used a disk drive cage that is designed to fit a 3.5 inch drive into a 5.25 inch housing (it came with one of my Teac 3.5s). By mounting a large block (3.5" x 5.0" x 1") of plexiglas in the 3.5 mounting slot, I could jam a cartridge connector in there between the 3.5 inch bezel and the front of the block. The connector consists of the plastic housing pulled off the 600XL and a 34 pin IDC edge connector like they use on a 5.25 disk drive. The connector (after a little filing on the ends) just fits inside the cavity on the cartridge housing, making a nice flat cable attached assembly. A cartridge fits rather nicely in the opening designed for the 3.5 even though there is a little extra side clearance. The other end of the 34 conductor cable plugs into a dual row .025 square pin connector. The pins themselves are mounted in the same holes as the old 30 pin cartridge connector (which you remove but don't need). Just be advised that the connector pins get mounted to the BOTTOM of the board so everything comes out right. Use wire-wrap length pins and bend them a little to fit. With this setup, you only use the 30 inside pins - the two pins on each end of the connector are empty. Piece of cake....



Wire in 9 pin joystick sockets directly to the board (my case has two cutouts in the back for chassis mounts).

Wire the P:R Connection directly to the board's SIO wiring (c'mon, don't sweat taking apart your P:R - wait 'till we do the XF551...!). From the P:R, wire in a 25 pin chassis mount (one male, one female) for the exterior connection of printer and RS-232 cables (two cutouts already here, also).

You'll now use IBM style cables.

OK, let's see.... got CPU, cartridge, keyboard, joysticks, printer, and RS-232. Guess it's time for a drive!

OK, take all the guts out of your XF551, drive and board. What we will do is cut out the +5v wiring from the regulator on the board and wire in another +5v line from the IBM supply to the board (this way, we don't need a 9 vac transformer). Now, you can either mount a 3.5 drive in the case (for which you will need an XF35 ROM) or use the XF551 drive or use one of each and switch between them. A short SIO cable from the P:R Connection will run the XF controller. A longer 34 pin cable will also be needed to connect to the drives. Mount the XF board in any convenient location on standoffs.

The rest of the project is taken up with wiring in whichever indicators and switches you care to activate. Stuff like power on lites and keylocks add just the right hi-tech touch.

If you like, you can add an XEP80 and an SX212 powered thru resistors on the +12 volt supply. Or a MicroPrint, even.

THE FOLLOWING IS A WRITE-UP ON THE KEYBOARD ADAPTOR REQUIRED FOR THIS PROJECT.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION:

The main emphasis of this product, was to provide a means of utilizing a better quality keyboard with the Atari than the one originally provided.

Since IBM style keyboards have become so plentiful and are made in numerous configurations, it was deemed that this would be the keyboard of choice. This gives the added flexibility of locating the keyboard where you want it, independent of the computer and it's associated peripheral equipment. Also, due to the additional function keys, cursor keys, ect., several new features are provided that could not be implemented by the original Atari keyboards. One of the most interesting of these, is the ability to send out full commands (BASIC & MAC65) with a single keypress.

THE HARDWARE

TRANSKEY is a microprocessor based translator board measuring aproximately 2.5 x 3.5 inches and designed to fit

underneath the RF shield on the Atari motherboard. The TRANSKEY board is provided with double sided tape attached to the solder side and is meant to be placed in a location where it can be sandwiched between the shield and the motherboard. The location will vary depending on what model of computer it is installed in. On the 1200XL it will be necessary to either cut the RF shield or not use it, since there is virtually no room underneath it.

On the 400/800 & all XL models, the TRANSKEY derives it's main communication and power from the Atari via a small piggy-back board that attaches to TRANSKEY with a ribbon cable. This piggy-back board is designed to be plugged into the socket where POKEY (Atari Part# C012294) would normally reside, with POKEY then plugged into the piggy-back board to complete the installation. On the unsocketed XE series machines, the installation requires soldering directly to the POKEY chip.

Assuming that one wishes to have START, SELECT, OPTION, and RESET available from the remote keyboard, it is required to attach 4 jumper wires. Three of these wires go to a single chip called CTIA or GTIA (Atari part# C014805) that contains the option select circuitry. The location of the 4th wire (Reset) varies depending on the model of computer. Installing these jumpers requires pulling the chip out of it's socket, inserting the bared end of the jumpers into the appropriate hole in the socket, and then re-inserting the chip that was removed. Of course, on the XE series it isn't possible to remove the chips, so these jumpers will have to be soldered in place.

With TRANSKEY installed, all normal operations of the Atari are unimpaired, including the use of the stock Atari keyboard. However, with TRANSKEY and an external IBM style keyboard attached, there will no longer be any need to use the stock keyboard except for the following conditions:

When Cold-Booting from cassette tape, it will only work by pushing START from the stock keyboard prior to engaging power.

To disable Basic on XL/XE machines, it will still be necessary to push OPTION on the stock keyboard (See 'Other Special Keys' for a way to disable basic after boot-up). The reason for this is that for the first few seconds after powering up, the IBM style keyboards usually run a self-test which basically doesn't allow for proper recognition of a key pressed during this time.

The IBM keyboard is connected by means of a 5 pin DIN inline jack attached by a short ribbon cable to the TRANSKEY main board. For those of you that prefer to permanently mount this jack, it is available as a chassis style

jack with mounting hardware (specify when ordering).

FEATURES

With either an XL or XE computer, almost full use of all the extra key functions on the IBM keyboard are implemented. This includes single key cursor movement, Home Cursor, End of Page Cursor and Insert/Delete modes. Also a special Cursor Left Page/Right Page is available by pressing Page Up or Page Down respectfully. On a 400/800 machine the page movement functions are not recognized, although everything else is.

These functions are directly accessible from the number pad after powering up the system (Default). If you want to use the number pad for number entry, simply press the NUMLOCK key. These functions will still be available, but will now require a Control - Function combination to initiate. If you want to restore the default condition (single keypresses), just press the NUMLOCK key once more (pressing NUMLOCK toggles between the two modes).

The Home key has yet another use, when pressed with the Shift key it will both home the cursor and clear the screen. This is the same as Shift - Clear on a stock Atari keyboard. Pressing the Escape key prior to this combination will still print the curved arrow symbol like the stock system.

The Insert & Delete keys when pressed with Shift, will perform whole line insertions or deletions.

If a 101 key Enhanced keyboard is being used, the extra cursor control, Insert and Delete keys will work the same as their number pad counterparts, unchanged by either Shift, Control or NUMLOCK.

Perhaps one of the nicest features, is the indication of CapsLock and NumLock by led indicator lights on IBM style keyboards that are so equipped.

The Function Keys:

On an XL or XE series machine Control F1 - F5 will provide the following special functions:

Control F1 Disables the keyboard (both stock and external) and until pressed again, all keys will be ignored by the computer.

Control F2 Disables DMA. Pressing this will cause the screen to go black until any other key is pressed. While the screen is black, processing time is accelerated by 30%.

Control F3 Disables the audible keyboard click when a

key is pressed, pressing it again will re-enable the click sound.

Control F4 Toggles between International symbols and standard graphics symbols on the screen.

Control F5 This acts as the HELP key, since there isn't one on most IBM keyboards.

On all other machines, 400/800's included, Control F6 acts as the Atari Inverse Video key, Control F7 is the BASIC macro select and Control F8 is the MAC65 macro select.

The last two keys (Control F7 & F8) control possibly the most interesting added feature of the new keyboard - the ability to send out an entire string of characters with but one keystroke (Macros). Built in to TRANSKEY are two predefined tables of some commonly used commands for either BASIC or MAC65 Assembly languages. These are sent by pressing F1 - F8 and depending upon whether Control F7 or Control F8 was last pressed, will spit out either the BASIC macro or the MAC65 macro (Defaults to BASIC on power-up). Below is a list of the supplied macro commands.

<note: the macros can be reprogrammed with a ProBurner>

--- MACROS ---

BASIC:

F1 LIST <CR>
F2 RUN <CR>
F3 SAVE"D:
F4 LOAD"D:
F5 ?PEEK(
F6 POKE
F7 SAVE"D:BACK <CR>
F8 ?FRE(0) <CR>

MAC65

F1 LIST <CR>
F2 ASM,#-,#D:
F3 SAVE#D:
F4 LOAD#D:
F5 FIND/
F6 REP/
F7 SAVE#D:BACK <CR>
F8 SIZE <CR>

Note: <CR> stands for Carriage Return. Commands with this as a suffix will be executed immediately.

Function keys F9 - F12 (F11 & F12 available on

Enhanced keyboards only) are used as option select keys.

F9 = START F10 = SELECT
F11 = OPTION F12 = HELP

OTHER SPECIAL KEYS

The key with the (~) and (') symbols on it (normally on the upper left corner) acts as an extra Escape key, thus placing it where most people are used to it being. Since these symbols are not directly available on the Atari, this key now has a practical use.

The key marked PRINT SCREEN (or Shift *) when pressed will output an unused character on the keyboard matrix (Dec #36, HEX \$24). This in itself isn't very useful, but with a little ingenuity on the user's part, this key could activate a screen dump program or other useful function.

Pressing Control, ALT and the NumPad DELETE key will result in a System Reset (assuming the Reset jumper wire was installed). Releasing the DELETE key prior to Control and ALT, will usually result in a re-boot with Basic disabled. Releasing the ALT key prior to DELETE, will result in a normal Reset with Basic enabled.

Keys not utilized are: SCROLL LOCK and the combination PAUSE/BREAK key found only on Enhanced keyboards.

SOFTWARE COMPATABILITY

TRANSKEY is an external independent device having it's own processor and memory which emulates a piece of hardware (a stock Atari keyboard). To the Atari computer, signals coming from TRANSKEY will be indistinguishable from signals that a stock keyboard would produce. This means that any software should be compatible with the TRANSKEY board with the following exceptions:

When a program such as a wordprocessor looks at keys in an entirely new light and essentially reassigns new meaning to these keys, there could be a conflict. An example would be where the extra symbols on the arrow keys no longer print to screen, but instead are used for moving the cursor to the next word or next line, etc. Since these characters are on entirely different keys on the IBM standard, it will take some experimentation to make the same things occur in a program of this kind.

KEYBOARDS TO USE

TRANSKEY was designed to be as flexible as possible and because of this should be compatible with most any IBM PC/XT/AT or 3rd party equivalent keyboard. Best results will usually be obtained by selecting an 'AT' configured (or dipswitch configurable) keyboard instead of the auto-configuring types.

Configuring TRANSKEY to the keyboard is extremely easy, all that is required is to plug in the keyboard with the computer off and then simply switch the computer on. TRANSKEY will then perform an analysis of the keyboard attached and auto-configure itself to it. If you have a switchable PC/AT keyboard, be sure to set it's dipswitches to 'AT' mode. This will insure proper setting of the CapsLock light on power up.

The following is a list of keyboards that have been tested with TRANSKEY and are known to work reliably.

IBM PC/XT/AT
BTC 53 series
KEYTRONICS EP3435XTAT
MITSUMI KPQ-E99YC
TELEVIDEO 113110
QUADRANT AT
EPC SK88018-10

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This month's DOM contains the complete MYDOS 4.5 package. The ramdisk loaders, docs, the works! It also has a version of MYMENU that has been "fixed" to run under MYDOS. Rounding out the utilities is TEXTSPLIT, a file splitting program for us limited memory types.

For the younger set, we have two super games - SLSWITCH and WORMSQUIRM, either of which is worth the price of a disk. Get 'em while they're hot!!

Bob Woolley SLCC

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Authorized Atari Business Computer Center

May 1990

SLCC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Main Meeting 8:00 P.M. San Leandro Library	2	3	4	5
6	7 ST Meeting 8:00 P.M. San Leandro Library	8	9	10	11	12
13	14 Midi Sig 8 PM	15	16 Journal Deadline	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30 ST Beginner's Sig 7:30 P.M.	31		

Special Interest Group (SIG) leaders and their phone numbers are in the Table of Contents.

Membership Application for the San Leandro Computer Club

Yes! I would like to receive 12 months of the SLCC JOURNAL along with other membership benefits, including software discounts, training, technical assistance and much, much more - all for the low, low price of \$20.00 (or \$40.00 if I am outside the US or Canada).

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____
(Street) (City) (State) (ZIP)

Home Phone: _____ (Optional) **Membership No.**

Computer(s) _____

Software ☐ Home Finance ☐ Desktop Publishing ☐ Games ☐ Scientific
Interests: ☐ Business ☐ Word Processing ☐ Educational ☐ Music ☐ Art

Some Interesting ways I use my computer: (Club members are interested in new usages for home, work and play)

MORAN'S MINUTES

GENERAL MEETING 04-03-90

The meeting was called to order at 8:10 PM by President Sammons. All Officers were present.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The President announced nominations for the annual Officers election would take place at the May regular meeting, further nominations and the election will take place at the June regular meeting. Newly elected officers will take over on July 1st. Listed below are the offices open for nomination and the requirements for each.

President - No skills required.
Vice president - About half presidents skills.

Treasurer - Must be able to count to 12.

Secretary - Must be loyal, brave, kind, handsome, sexy, intelligent and own a pen. *

DeWayne Stuart has been appointed Editor of the newsletter. DeWayne replaces Frank and Jennie Kliever who have saved a big wad from their generous salary as editors. They will spend their wad on a long, elaborate vacation in greater downtown Oakland next April 1st.

Ed Blanchard asked if anyone had any experience with the "MASTER" disk drive for the ST. No takers.

Bob Scholar wondered if there was any word on what, if any, action, ANALOG MAGAZINE would take on remaining subscription issues? Still no takers.

Rumor has it that 3E Software may be going out of business 1st.

ANTIC MAGAZINE who was scheduled as tonight's speaker, had to cancel till a later date. They sent a copy of the newly revised PHASER 4.0 for the club to use and review.

TIMEWISE for the 8 bit has been donated for the raffle by Pete Corona.

A representative from MICRO SOLUTIONS brought a sample of the finished TRANSKEY board, the little goody that allows an IBM style remote keyboard to be used with any ATARI 8 bit computer. They have improved it so it works

with 90% of the different keyboards available for the IBM. The next item they are experimenting with is a Transkey for the ST.

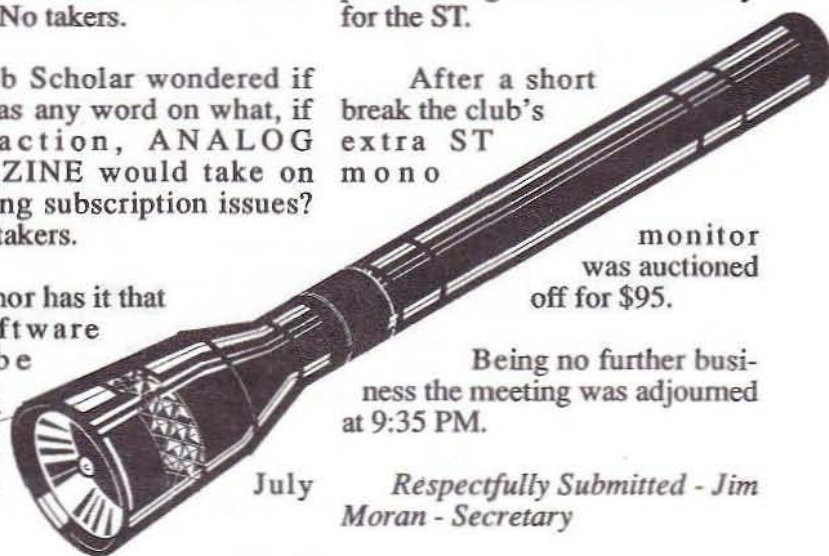
After a short break the club's extra ST mono

monitor was auctioned off for \$95.

Being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted - Jim Moran - Secretary

* (Seems Jim isn't planning on running for Secretary??? ed.)



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WINNER'S CIRCLE SYSTEMS

FROM THE PREZ:

Don't forget that nomination of officers will start at the next General Meeting with another chance at nominations during the June General Meeting, after which elections will be held.

Please note that some of our advertising clients have increased their discounts for the month of May.

Raffle prizes for the June General and ST meetings shall be wonderful, exciting games - "MindFighter" (a graphic adventure based on the novel by Anna Popkess), "StreetFighter" (martial arts combat game), "Captain America in The Doom Tube of Dr Megalomann", "Star Wars" (you know). Also, we may raffle or auction off a copy of "Ashments House Estimator 2" -(from the residential construction series for the ST). I'm sure we will have raffle prizes for the 8bit crowd.

Our speaker for the General Meeting will be Bill Yerger of MicroWorld and; hopefully, Scott from Antic will show up for the ST Meeting at which Ralf might give a review of "Pha\$ar".

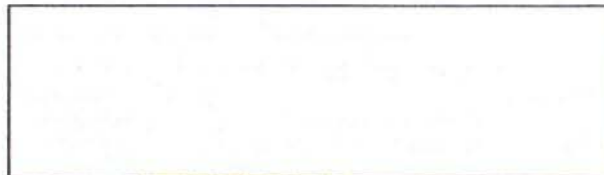
We need a volunteer to handle the Telecommunications SIG.

My idea for aquisition of a Moniterm monitor might have gone down the tubes as I'm told that they no longer offer product for the Atari.

That's it for now,

KK

San Leandro Computer Club
P.O.Box 1506
San Leandro, Ca. 94577-0374



General Meeting:
May 1, 1990